

Fall 8-15-2004

## ENG 4300-4390-002-098: Senior Seminar: Tellers & Tales

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English 4300 (002) & 4390 (097) Fall 2004

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By definition narrative art requires a story and a story-teller. In the relationship between the teller and the tale, and that other relationship between the teller and the audience, lies the essence of narrative. ~ Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*

## Senior Seminar: Tellers & Tales

MWF 10:00- 10:50 in CH3159

**Textbook:** *Reading Narrative Fiction*, Chatman = RNF  
**Anthology:** *The Story and its Writer*, Charters (6<sup>th</sup> edition, compact) = SW  
+ companion web-site: [www.bedfordstmartins.com/charters](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/charters)  
**Fiction:** *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, Butler  
*My Antonia*, Cather  
*A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway  
*Nappy Hair*, Herron (picture book)  
*Amazing Grace*, Hoffman (picture book)

## Course Objectives & Assignments

This semester, we will read, respond to, discuss, report on, and write about a variety of narratives. Our textbook—*Reading Narrative Fiction*—is intended to help us re-think the literary-critical vocabulary we use to describe the workings of these fictions. Our discussions will begin on-line (you will write a series of informal responses to these assigned readings and post them on Web-CT) and continue in lively class discussions. By the end of the semester, you will have written and revised a mid-term essay, contributed to a group presentation at the English Conference Saturday November 13, and shared the results of your individual research project in an informal presentation to the class and in a formal research paper. (There will be no final exam.) These activities should provide the information and experience we need to develop, test and refine our ideas about tellers, their tales, and their audiences.

## Tentative Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

Week 1

8/23 Introductions

25 "The Necklace" (SW 524) + "The Writer's Goal" (SW 896) by Guy de Maupassant

27 "Hands" (SW 16) + "Form, Not Plot . . ." (SW 840) by Sherwood Anderson

Week 2

30 "Happy Endings" (SW 21) + "Reading Blind" by Margaret Atwood (SW 843)

- 9/1 "Autobiographical Notes" by James Baldwin (SW 846)  
+ "Writing Short Stories" by Flannery O'Connor (SW 910)  
3 "The Bath" (SW 76) + "On Writing" (SW 941) by Raymond Carver  
[Optional reading: "Creative Writing 101" (SW 946)]

Week 3

- 6 Labor Day: *No Class Meeting*  
8 "A Small Good Thing," Raymond Carver (SW 81) + "As Raymond Carver  
Muses, His Stature Grows," Jim Naughton (SW 950)  
10 "The Flowers," Alice Walker (RNF 9) & "Two Portraits," Kate Chopin (RNF 14),  
*then the rest of chapter one in Reading Narrative Fiction: "What is Narrative?"*

Week 4

- 13 RNF 2: Plot (*you may want to continue to read the stories first, then the chapter*)  
15 continued  
17 RNF 3: Character and Setting

Week 5

- 20 continued  
22 RNF 4: Narration  
24 continued

Week 6

- 27 RNF 5: Point of View  
29 continued  
10/1 RNF 6: Narrative Irony

Week 7

- 4 continued  
6 RNF 7: Authors and Readers  
8 Fall Break: *No Class Meeting*

Week 8

- 11 RNF 8: Theme and Ideology  
13 continued  
15 continued  
Topic Proposals DUE: Mid-term Essay

Week 9

- 18 Annotated Stories DUE: Mid-term Essay  
20 Mid-term Essay DUE/Begin *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway (ch. 1)  
22 *A Farewell to Arms*

Week 10

- 25 *A Farewell to Arms*  
27 *A Farewell to Arms*  
29 *A Farewell to Arms* + Related Readings (TBA)

## Week 11

- 11/1 *A Farewell to Arms* + Related Readings (TBA)  
 3 *A Farewell to Arms*; Group Presentation Topic Proposal DUE  
 5 Group Meetings/Tasks (I'll be at the Midwest Writing Center Conference)

## Week 12

- 8 In-class Group Meeting  
 10 Draft DUE Presentation Outline + Handout  
 12 Presentation Handout DUE

**11/13 (Saturday) English Conference in Coleman Hall**

## Week 13

- 15 *Amazing Grace* + *Nappy Hair*  
 17 "Insiders, Outsiders and the Question of Authenticity," Nina Mikkelsen;  
 Individual Project Topic Proposal DUE  
 19 Read two Stories from *A Good Scent From a Strange Mountain*

## Week 14

*Thanksgiving Break*

## Week 15

- 29 Meet in Booth Library  
 12/1 Preliminary Annotated Bibliography DUE  
 3 No Class Meeting; Individual Conferences

## Week 16

- 6 Presentation Handout DUE  
 8 Begin Individual Presentations (approx. 10 minutes)  
 10 Continue Individual Presentations

## Finals Week

12/16 Thursday 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Paper DUE; Finish Individual Presentations

## Grades

Web CT Responses	350 points ~ scored several times during the semester
Mid-term Essay	200 ~ may be revised
Group Presentation	150 ~ score based on quality of content + preparation
Individual Project	300 ~ formal paper (250) + informal presentation (50)
Participation	<u>50</u>
	1000 points total*

*\*it may be necessary to adjust point values if we add, cancel, or revise any assignments.*

**The bottom line:** grades will not be curved.

91% & above= A    81-90%= B    71-80%= C    61-70%= D    60% & below= F

**Things You Need to Know About This Class**

- Attendance counts. If you have more than 4 unexcused absences, you will not receive *any* of the 50 points set aside for participation.
- Keep in touch! Un-excused late work will be penalized significantly. If you are experiencing temporary difficulties, come see me so we can work something out.
- You must complete all major assignments to pass this course.
- Documentation of print and electronic sources must conform to MLA style.
- "Plagiarism" refers to problems ranging all the way from citation errors (which offenders *will* be required to eradicate) to serious matters of intellectual theft (punishable by a failing grade for the assignment or the course). If you have *any* questions about what to cite and how to cite it, see me, consult the MLA Handbook, or visit the Writing Center down the hall in CH 3110 (581-5929).
- Students with Disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) soon so we can work out appropriate accommodations.

**Web-CT**

This semester you will post informal written responses on a Web-CT discussion board.

***So, what's a "response"? How do I know if I'm writing good ones?***

A response is 300-500 words (the equivalent of 1 - 2 typed, double-spaced pages) in which you articulate—and then share—your intellectual response to assigned readings. The discussion board is a place for you to think things through and a place where your responses help classmates develop their ideas. It's a place where the effort you put into working through ideas counts more than the "correctness" of your writing. Responses can focus on larger issues ("How does narrational perspective affect reader response?"), but they usually start with specific questions and observations ("Why does the author include all this description?"), supported by detailed explanations and specific examples (with page numbers). Good responses apply terms and concepts from our textbooks and discussions and they show an awareness of and respect for other people's ideas.

***How will these responses be graded?***

**Completeness**—big points will be deducted for late or missing responses

**Length**—as it reflects your efforts to develop and illustrate ideas

**Specificity & Detail**—the extent to which analysis of texts is grounded in these texts

**Scope**—comparisons between texts, connections to issues & ideas we've been discussing

**Recursiveness**—re-consideration, re-vision, and refinement of ideas over the semester

**Free Advice**

Use exact quotes (followed by page numbers in parenthesis). Spell out questions and comments as fully as possible. Try to use the information and terms from texts and lecture.

**The bottom line:** honest effort will be rewarded. Consistent effort is the key.